

ENG 170: FOUNDATIONS IN LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

Room: STV 0221 B

Times: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 1:00-1:50A

Instructor: Meghann Meeusen

Contact Information:

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I prefer email as the method to contact me with inquiries regarding class, and check for messages regularly. Please only use my private phone for dire emergencies and keep in mind I am not always available to answer.

Office Hours: MWF 12pm-12:50pm

I am also available outside of these times by appointment.

TEXT REQUIREMENTS

Required Texts (Recommended for Purchase):

- Donna Jo Napoli's *Zel*
- Kate DiCamillo's *The Tale of Despereaux*
- Brian Selznick's *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*
- J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, Illustrated by Scott Gustafson
- Rick Riordan's *Lightning Thief* (Percy Jackson & the Olympians #1)
- A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*, Illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard
- H. A. Rey and Margaret Rey's *A Treasury of Curious George*
- Robert Paul Weston's *Zorgamazoo*
- Deborah Ellis's *The Breadwinner*
- Ibtisam Barakat's *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood*

The following required picture books will be available on reserve at the library:

- Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*
- Paul O. Zelinsky's *Rapunzel* and Shannon Hale's *Rapunzel's Revenge*
- Jon J. Muth's *Zen Shorts*
- Laban Carrick Hill and Bryan Collier's *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave*
- Uri Shulevitz's *How I Learned Geography*
- James Rumford's *Silent Music*
- *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: Lightning Thief: The Graphic Novel* by Rick Riordan, Robert Venditti, Attila Futaki, Jose Villarrubia (suggested only)

Textbook Note: Additional reading will be provided digitally or via handout. In all cases, any edition/version of a text is acceptable, including digital texts. Listening to books via audio is also encouraged, although a hard copy is necessary for class. Finally, although many materials are available and/or submitted online, some printing is necessary, so please make sure you have the means by which to do so.

COURSE OVERVIEW

As the first course in the children's literature sequence at Illinois State University, ENG 170, *Foundations in Literature for Children*, is designed to serve as a general introduction to literature for those students studying children's literature. The course covers K-8th grade literature. The primary goal of the course is for students to learn to read literature using children's literature as texts.

The course focuses on children's texts for pre-readers and young readers, including picture books, chapters books, series books, novels, poetry and nursery rhymes, folklore, mythologies, information books and children's films at the K-8th grade level. Texts covered in the class include both canonical and noncanonical texts, recognized and recent children's texts, with attention to classics and multicultural texts, both historical and contemporary. Students in the class learn a range of conceptual materials as they are exposed to this wide variety of children's texts, including how to analyze genre, narrative and poetic form, ideology and issues of social construction, and introductory literary concepts.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will interrogate the ways that scholars and teachers think, write and speak about literary texts, both producing examples of this unique literary approach and articulating the defining characteristics of such literary discourse in its various forms.
- Students will investigate the common and conflicting trends in how scholars and teachers think about texts, with particular attention to analysis and interpretation.
- Students will demonstrate and reflect on their own use of purposeful writing techniques and rhetorical strategies as fitting within the conventions of scholarly writing and other forms of writing about literature.
- Students will prepare for future studies in literature by building foundational skills in literary analysis, criticism and technique.
- Students will explore and articulate explicit and implicit ideologies, studying texts in terms of their social context with special attention to intertextuality, historical basing and position within contemporary culture.
- Students will build knowledge about foundational topics, concepts, theories and approaches to children's texts, with particular emphasis on defining children's literature and notions of genre, media and mode.
- Students will develop a language with which to discuss children's texts built on contemporary theoretical perspectives.

SEMESTER TOPICS

UNIT ONE: Once Upon a Time Revisited

- Trapped in a Tower: binaries, power and ideology in fairy tales
- Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread: redefining heroism and exploring motif
- Teenage Demigod: mythology for modern times

UNIT TWO: Who is the Child? Canonical Texts and Adaptation

- I Won't Grow Up: defining childhood in classic terms
- Honeypots and Hundred Acers: character analysis and metaphor
- The Curious Child: adult child relationships, didacticism and television

UNIT THREE: Complicating the Caldecott (and other award winners)

- Genre Bender: Hugo Cabret in fiction and film
- Wild Things: visual analysis and picture book interpretation
- Culture in Check: rethinking cultural depictions in contemporary Caldecotts
- Fun with Form: playing with poetry tradition

UNIT FOUR: Cultural Exploration—Eastern Children's Literature

- Not the Little Mermaid You Know: children's film and cultural perspectives
- Powerful Child: questions of audience, authorship and purpose
- Navigating Nonfiction: memoir as a window into culture

ASSIGNMENTS & STUDENT WORK

ASSIGNMENT CONTENT

Individual Writing Project- 40%: Scholars and teachers who study literature write in a variety of ways, utilizing numerous approaches and multiple genres. This project asks students to choose their own approach to writing about literature, purposefully and thoughtfully selecting or creating (and defining) a genre that will demonstrate their understanding of the unique ways that scholars and teachers think about literary texts. This project includes several components: a proposal, an annotated bibliography, the project and a reflection. Students will also be required to attend a conference outside of class with the instructor regarding their topics.

Portfolio- 40%: Literary scholars think, speak and write about literature in very specific ways. The purpose of the portfolio and report is to interrogate these practices, methods and approaches to literature, so that students might replicate this kind of thinking and transfer this critical consciousness to new situations. To do so, students will produce a variety of written/spoken genres and comment on these texts, attempting to articulate what are the similarities and differences in the ways that literary scholars think about literature. In addition to producing texts and responding to reading, each week students will log participation, then use these materials collectively to produce a final report.

Critical Thinking Log and Final Report- 20%: Throughout the semester, students will complete a “critical thinking log”, which describes the work they’ve done and/or what they’ve learned about this kind of analytical approach. These entries will be brief, but serve to demonstrate the development of an understanding of how scholars, writers and teachers think about literary texts. This log will be checked periodically to make sure students are staying current, with a 5% grade deduction if the log is ever more than one week behind.

Then, after completing their portfolio, students will use this resource to produce a comprehensive report about the ways that scholars think and write about literature. Students will thoroughly annotate and describe the uniquely literary approaches, critical thinking practices and analytical activity of their entries throughout their portfolio, then write a final report which identifies what they have learned about how scholars think about texts.

Friday Film Days: As children’s film will be an important part of coursework, students will have the opportunity to attend group viewings of film adaptations on various Fridays from approximately 2-4pm. These film viewings are optional, but the films presented may be used for visual text reviews or compare/conclude portfolio entries.

GRADING / METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Scores are based on how proficiently the conventions of specific genres are met, as well as whether projects are complete, thoughtful, insightful, detailed, specific and robust. Students are expected to interrogate the ways that scholars think, talk and write about texts and demonstrate an understanding of this unique approach in their own work, then reflect and articulate their understanding of this approach. Methods of assessment for individual projects will be articulated further on assignment handouts and in class discussions. If you ever have any questions about grading, methods of assessment or expectations, please do not hesitate to speak with me, and I would be happy to discuss these elements with you individually.

Please also note that some entries in your portfolio need to be posted on the online (public) course wiki. This includes reviews, critical readings responses, scribe recordings and a discussion board. **In addition to these public posting, students should ALSO include a copy of these entries in the portfolio they submit for grading.** This portfolio may be electronic or printed, but must be organized and contain a table of contents.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

90%-100% A	exceptional, outstanding work
80%-89% B	strong, thoughtful work
70%-79% C	average, complete work
60%-69% D	problematic, sloppy work
59% F	incomplete, careless work

ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK

As active participants in an academic community, students must attend class every day. Furthermore, regular attendance is necessary for successful completion of all major assignments. Thus, exceptional attendance will be rewarded by extra credit added final grade (3% for perfect attendance, 2% for only one missed day, 1% for two missed days, 0.5% for three missed days). Excessive absence may also incur grade deductions from the final score. Attendance will be completed via a sign in sheet, and it is students' responsibility to sign in each day to receive extra credit.

If a student must be absent, he/she is responsible for all missed content, including turning in assignments on their given due date. Please demonstrate professionalism by arriving to class on time. Any health conditions that prevent students from regular attendance should be discussed with me at the beginning of the semester.

I do not accept late work. Although I reserve the right to make exceptions to this policy, this is both rare and unlikely, and is only possible after a meeting with me. If you foresee a problem completing an assignment on time, please speak to me **at least 48 hours in advance**, at which time I am far more open to making arrangements.

OTHER PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

Student Conduct: As adults in the academic community, a respectful and appropriate behavior code is expected at all times. However, should this behavior code be broken by a disruptive or disrespectful student, he/she may be asked to remove him/herself from class for the day. For information on specific behavior expectations, please see the ISU Student Conduct Code.

Furthermore, I expect professional behavior that shows respect to our classroom community. Please arrive to class on time and remain attentive for the entirety of our time together, respecting our shared academic goals with your active participation.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism: Students are responsible for making themselves aware of and understanding the policies and procedures found in the Student Code of Conduct, including those policies regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Although plagiarism comes in many forms, students are expected above all to produce their own work in an ethical and honest way. Additionally, issues of correct citation and use of resources are crucial to both work as a student and development as a writer, and students are expected to consider carefully these tenets in the production of all class texts. Students should consult with the instructor if they are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment.

Students engaging in any level of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will have to meet with the instructor outside of class to discuss academic penalty based on the severity of

the offense, which can include a failing grade on the assignment or a failing grade in the entire course.

Accommodations and Students Services: Any student needing to arrange an accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TTY). I also strive to create a productive classroom environment flexible to all students and individual situations. If you find that there are ways that the class could be better molded to your particular needs, please speak to me, and I would be happy to help navigate a way to work with you.

Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu or by calling [\(309\) 438-3655](tel:3094383655).

Computers in the Classroom: Although I encourage students to use personal computers in the classroom, once class begins, every student should be actively engaged in class content. Electronic readers may be used for class texts when available as long as the format remains reasonably similar.